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T W O
S E R M O N S
Formerly P R E A C H ' D in the
Cathedral-Church
O F
W O R C E S T E R. K

a Late P R E B E N D A R T of the said
C H U R C H.

*Dr Miles Stapylton. DD.
late fellow of All Souls.*



L O N D O N: Ⓢ
Printed in the Year, M.DCCXXXVI.



The Providence of God, the Security of good Men.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D AT THE

Cathedral-Church of

WORCESTER.

a Late *PREBENDARY* of the said
CHURCH.



Printed in the Year, MDCCXXXVI.





THE P R E F A C E.



IF it be necessary to give any Account of the following Sermons, the Reader may understand that they were transcribed from the Author's own Manuscripts, for some who had heard them preach'd, and were very desirous to have the further perusal of them for their own private benefit. And tho' they were not prepar'd when design'd for the Press, yet a very high Esteem for the Doctor's Memory, and an equal desire of communicating to others the Benefit of two such useful and excellent Courses, has prevail'd with his Friends, to whose Hands those Copies were intrusted at length to make them Publick.

If

*If there are any little Inaccuracies in the
owing either to the in-attention of the Au-
thor or the fault of the Transcribers, they
needs no other Apology than that they were
not intended for the Press; and whatever
they are, they must disappear to those, who
know how to esteem as they ought, the
admirable Spirit of Piety and fine Reasoning
that runs in so clear a Manner thro' the
whole.*

*'Twere much to be wish'd, and would
a singular benefit to the Publick, if the Per-
son into whose hands they are fallen, would
raise up a Monument more worthy of the
Author's Memory, by publishing many more
those excellent Discourses that gave such
quisite Pleasure to his Hearers, and have
so grateful a Sense of him in their Minds.
And if the Reception, these find might
invite him to do so, it wou'd be a very
sensible Satisfaction to the Persons that have
communicated these, and be thought a ve-
rable Advantage of the publishing of them.*

Romans viii.†28.

*And we know that all things
work together for good, to
them that love God.*



THE Assurance that all Events in the *moral* World as well as all Effects in the *natural*, are directed by an All-wise and infinitely good God, to the Benefit and Advantage of his faithful Servants, is with a great encouragement to Christians to do their Duty, and also a mighty support in all their Sufferings. When we know that our Prayers are ever heard, and that tho' what we pray for be not granted, yet something as good or better is always given us; —when we are convinc'd that how things go, whether the hop'd-for Success

cess crown our Wishes, or Disappointments and Crosses be our Lots, yet both one and the other work together for our great Good, this must engage us to admire and adore the indulgent Providence which disposes Things thus, and with a Resignation and Cheerfulness, entirely to rely upon the God, who takes such Care of us, and the properest Means (because of his over-choosing) leads us to Happiness.

We know, being fully perswaded by the clear Evidence, and infallible Certainty of that Principle which demonstratively infers this Truth, that all Things work together for good; all seeming Contingencies, as well as what comes to pass in the settled course of things, do the Issue wonderfully conspire to the best and eternal Interest of them that love God — of the true, faithful, and obedient Christians : We are assur'd of this, I say, because the express Promise of God declares that he will, and our own Reason and Experience tells us that he does continually interpose, powerfully guide, and unerringly accomplish

accomplish all the Affairs of his Creatures; and in the End, tho' we do not alway discern the Means, does thus bring about the eternal Blis of those that *believe*, and *trust* and love H I M.

THIS Christian Doctrine I now advance directly in Opposition to those amongst us, who do either *too much cry up* the FORCE of *natural Reason* and LIBERTY of Man's Will; or *depress* GOD'S INSPECTION of our present, and PRESCIENCE of our future Actions: who to open the way to *Free-thinking* and *licentious Living*, would remove the *insurmountable* Obstacle of GOD'S immediate PRESENCE *with* and PROVIDENCE over us. Against the Men of *these loose principles* which, 'tis notorious, do so fatally influence the generality of our Practice, I wou'd maintain and illustrate the Assertion of the Apostle in the Text. And however I may succeed in the Undertaking, I can't think I shall have the good Wishes of all that hear me, because I propose nothing but what has the *universal Suffrage* and Acknowledgment of all that wou'd seem to be

of *any Religion*, and is indeed the great *Anchor and Support* of all that are of the *True* it being *that* without the *firm Belief* which we Christians should be of all *Most Miserable*.

Now that I may do this the more effectually, I shall (first) lay before you some *familiar and obvious*, but withal the *unquestion'd and concluding* Consideration that occur, to convince you that *God's Providence* does *GENTLY, yet EFFECTUALLY* cause all things whatsoever to work together for our good.

2dly. I shall in some Instances deduce the *Good and Advantage*, which from hence does result to *all that sincerely love God*.

I am first to lay before you some *Familiar &c.*

I said *GOD* does *EFFECTUALLY* cause all things to work together for our good; Because with Respect to his *Almighty Power* there is not any *Creature* can pretend to

at his *Will*, nor can oppose any Bar or Hindrance to his *Design*. I said GENTLY; Behold with Respect to his *infinite Wisdom*, he conducts *all* his Creatures to their End by Ways *proportion'd* to their *several* Natures, without putting a Force upon their *natural* instinct, or laying any *Restraint* upon the choice of *free Agents*. And thus he turns them as he sees fit, and brings about his purpose and Design.

To evidence this, I propose the Considerations that offer themselves to this Purpose by these Steps and Degrees.

1st. IT is to be consider'd that *we can't* survey the *WORLD* about us, without observing that things do proceed in a wonderful Order and Harmony, and visibly contribute both to the *Beauty* of the *UNIVERSE*, and to the *Use* and *Convenience* of the *SEVERAL PARTICULARS* therein contain'd. That this is so, is I think acknowledged by All, and is the *immediate* Object of our *Senses*. Now 'twould demand *how* it comes to be so, and what is *that Cause* which does *so* regularly conduct

conduct each thing to its proper good ; and to the Perfection of the Whole ? How come it to pass that * CREATURES, confessedly void of *Understanding, Sense, and Life*, should do their Work with *so much Art and Method* ? How come they to take such Measures and use such Means to bring about their Ends, without being *capable* of either *knowing* the *End* or *discerning* the *Means* ? Must we not acknowledge some SUPERIOR CAUSE which supplies the *Want* of *Choice* and *Defect* of *Reason* ? Is there not a WISDOM that *conducts* and *guides* their *Actions* ? I will not ask what *gives Motion* to the HEAVENLY BODIES, but I wou'd fain know why they keep in *so constant a Course* and produce the *different Seasons* in that *steady Variety*, which is absolutely necessary to the Life and Sustenance of all that breathe. Why does the SUN *so duly approach* and *retire, rise and set*, and so opportunely point out the Time, --- *now* for the Labour and Toil, --- and *then* for the Rest and Repose both of *Man and Beast* ? What restrains the WATERS of the SEA which in their ordi-

Sun, Moon, &c.

Natur

Nature wou'd cover the EARTH, and mi-
 raculously seem to threaten an universal Deluge?
 Surely it can be nothing, but *that* PROVI-
 DENCE which has prescrib'd its Bounds and
 Limits, and has said to it, *Hitherto shalt
 thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy
 proud waves be stayed.* Job xxxviii. 11.
 That gives Fertility to the EARTH, and
 makes it produce its Fruits in such abun-
 dance? Is it not the *indulgent* Care of our
 HEAVENLY FATHER who thus provides for the
 necessity and Convenience of his Children?
 Who is it that **makes the Sun to rise on the
 evil and on the Good, and sends Rain on the
 just and on the Unjust*; but the GREAT
 MASTER of the Family; who thus supplies
 the Occasions of his Servants who are all
 employ'd in his Work,—all serving the De-
 signs of his Providence,—and all busied in
 doing his Will on Earth as it is in Heaven?
 2dly. To go a little higher: There is a
 CLASS of BEINGS which tho' as *void of Un-
 derstanding* as the foregoing, yet being en-
 dued with *Sense*, are not determin'd to one

Object only, but do exert a *great Variety of Actions*; and yet their Doings can't be accounted for; without allowing the immediate HAND OF PROVIDENCE. Do but advert to the *Wonders* of the *most inconsiderable INSECTS*, and it is impossible not to discover *most evident Foot-steps* of an *artful and contrivance*. See with what *Wonder* the SPIDER provides for her *Sustenance*, and with what *Cunning* she spreads her Nets to entangle the unwary Prey! It is our everyday's Wonder to observe the *early Provision* on the FOWLS of the AIR make for the Time to come, and with what *inimitable Art* they build their *Nests* for the better Reception of their future young Ones. What shall we say to the *formed Societies*, *regular Government*, and the *united Labour and Concurrence* in laying up their common Store, which is so well known and so often refer'd to, in the BEES and the ANTS; whose *Diligence* and *Address* the Holy Scriptures point, and to whose *Example* they direct the *sluggish Man* to be better instructed. But whether or no we will learn *this Lesson of Industry* from them, there is another

hardly avoid: We can't wink so hard, we must discern a PROVIDENCE working, and with these his irrational Creatures. For we shall not surely ascribe these Effects to any internal Principle of Reason or Wisdom in those Things, which modern Philosophy will allow to be but mere Matter in Motion; and yet 'tis plain, they pursue proper Ends with more Order and Regularity than MAN, with all his Pretences of Knowledge and Prudence, does his. We must not father these constant and uniform Productions on blind Hazard, or giddy Chance: There is nothing in Nature more unlike, than capricious Events are to those Products of Design and Contrivance. Shall we say all this is done by natural Instinct? If by this we mean any Principle within the Creatures themselves, by the Force and Vertue which they act thus; then why do we call them irrational Beings? Why do we place them in a lower Rank than MAN? Why do we say they are endow'd with nothing but Sense, if with that? But if by Instinct we mean the Influence of the GOD of NATURE upon them, then what I am contending

tending for, is granted, *viz.* That *all* this is perform'd by the *Guidance* of PROVIDENCE; That *there is in the World* a SUPREME REASON which has *stamp'd some faint Resemblance of it self* upon all its Creature. That there is a SOVEREIGN WISDOM which *sustains, actuates, and directs all things* to the Ends *he has design'd them*; That from the View both of the One and the Other we can't be Ignorant tho' we wou'd, we can't but know that GOD *does preside in the World*, and that *by HIM all things work together for Good to us.*

3dly. To advance one Step more:--THE HAND of PROVIDENCE is *no less conspicuous* in the Government of the *rational World* of MAN, whom God has left in the *Hand of his Counsel*, endow'd with *Liberty and Choice*, and made *Lord and Master of his own Actions*. For tho' we may, and (God knows) too often do make a perverse Use of this Liberty,---* *do follow our own Way* ---do find our own Pleasure;---and do speak our own Words; yet whatever we think or do, it, we are in Truth *as much under the Power*

* Isaiah lviii. 13.

of PROVIDENCE, as if we did *otherwise*.
 It's true, from hence do proceed all the Er-
 rors, Disorders, Wars, Destructions and
 Calamities that are, all the Sin and Wick-
 edness that is committed in the World;
 which tho' *directly opposite to God's Com-*
mands, yet are *not exempted from His Ma-*
agement who *well knows how*, and *always*
bringing some great Good out of those great-
Evils. Whatever Road the Sinner takes,
 whether he goes astray in the *By-paths* of
 his own choosing, or runs unthinkingly
 in the *Broad-way* that leads to Destruc-
 tion, *he still travels* whether he will or no
 in the *Tract of PROVIDENCE*, and can ne-
 ver frustrate its Purpose: God always brings
 about the Execution of his Designs, as much
 by the obstinate Resistance of Men's per-
 verse Will, as by their Obedience; as well by
 their Refractoriness, as in doing their Duty.
 For in what State soever they are, they are
 way subservient either to the declaring his
 Mercy or to the Manifestation of his Jus-
 tice; *his Mercy*, if they return from their
 ill Way; *his Justice*, if they persevere in
 their Impieties.---That he may not put a

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Constraint

.Constraint on their Liberty, he permits them, since they are resolv'd to do so, to transgress his Laws; but then this still leads to their final Estate, — Misery, if they die in their Sins; or Happiness, if they repent and live a new Life. And thus PROVIDENCE is never disappointed, but makes each Person instrumental to his Glory, which is illustrated both in our Salvation and our Loss, both by the Exercise of God's Justice, and by the Expression of his Mercy.

HENCE you can't but see that all, both GOOD and BAD, notwithstanding their *Liberty and Choice*, do effectually contribute to the *Designs of PROVIDENCE and GOD*: But with this sad Difference, *THOSE* do it *willingly and designedly*, *THOSE* *besides and against* their Intentions; *THOSE* by their *submissive Compliance* with, *THOSE* by their *stubborn Resistance* of God's Will. *THOSE* do it to their *unspeakable Bliss*, *THOSE* to their *utter Destruction*. What, tho' *Enemies of Providence* presume to doubt or despise his taking Notice of them? What, tho' the *Libertines* struggle with their Yoke or break thro' the Fences of the Divine Law?

Shall *this* destroy the *Nature* of
 things; or make *That* cease to *Be*, which
 the *Foundation* of *all Beings*? No; these
 men may *abuse* their *Free-will*: Instead of
 following *those Methods* which PROVIDENCE
 walks out to lead them to Heaven, they
 comply with the *impetuous* Motions of
 their Passions and Appetites, their *disorder'd*
 Inclinations and *ungovernable* Lusts; but *this*
 is so far from perswading us *against*, that
 they themselves become *Arguments* for, and
 Instances of the *being* of PROVIDENCE.
 They will not comply with the Proposals
 God offers to bring them to *Life*, there-
 fore they shall be *constrain'd* to obey his Sen-
 tence that dooms them to *Death*; they
 will not submit to the gentle Government
 of his *Goodness* and *Indulgence*, they there-
 fore will *ingulf* themselves under the Dominion
 of his *Severity* and *Vengeance*; they will
 not take up the *easy* Yoke and *light* Bur-
 den of God's *Commands*, they are there-
 fore *consign'd* over to the *rigorous* Slavery
 of their *own Sins*, and *insupportable* Tyran-
 ny of their Adversary *the Devil*.

ON the other Hand, the GOOD CHRISTIAN is so *clearly* perswaded of *this Truth* by *Reason* and *Discourse*, so *heartily* satisfied of it by the *Testimonies* of his *Faith*, and so *fully* convinc'd by his *own Sense* and *Experience*, that he *entirely* resigns himself up to, and *without Reserve* reposes and relies himself upon GOD'S GOOD PROVIDENCE as well knowing in all the various Turns and Dispensations of it, *all Things shall work together for his Good*. For God's Truth has never fail'd any that ever rely'd upon it; nor balk'd the Expectation of him that trusted it; does always relieve his Necessities and sweeten his Afflictions. The EYE OF PROVIDENCE is *open* and *awake* to his Preservation, tho' it *sometimes* may perhaps *seem* to slumber;—God is always near and present with him, even at *those very Moments* when he *appears to be withdrawn*. And tho' God doth sometimes suffer his Servants to groan under Want, or Pain, Grief, or Trouble; yet *even this very thing is an Instance of his Love*, who by this very Means gives occasion to exercise their Patience, try their Virtue and augment their Charity.

charity here, that so they may encrease
 their Reward and enhance their Glory here-
 after. And thus *his* PROVIDENCE does
conspicuously appear, whilst *his infinite*
 WISDOM contrives to bring the greatest Ad-
 vantages from *that very Thing* which seem'd
 most irksome and grievous to them ;--whilst
 he turns all Events to their Good, even those
 which appear'd most of all other to hurt
 and endamage them,--whilst he *unerringly*
 conducts them to their HOME by Ways so
 admirably concerted, that they never fail
 in accomplishing their appointed Work.
 Lastly, and Lastly. If after what has
 been said, any Doubt of this can remain in
 our Minds, consider some of the many
 Instances in Holy Writ, wherein the DIVINE
 PROVIDENCE has *actually* appear'd in Be-
 half of his People, and that in so *astonishing*
 Manner, as no *human* Prudence cou'd
 foresee, nor can any *natural* Reason account
 for. Doubtless *Joseph's* Brethren look'd
 farther than the Sacrificing him to their
 Envy and Jealousy, when they sold him
 for a Slave into *Egypt* ; but PROVIDENCE
 had a very different Purpose to bring about
 by

by this Act,--not only *Joseph's* strange Advancement, but the Preservation of his Father and Family (and among them the very Persons who sold him) from perishing by Famine. It is *Joseph's* own Reflection (*Gen. xlv. 5, 8. and l. 20.*) more than once for thus he accosts his Brethren, *Now therefore* (says he) *be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve Life.* And again, *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.* And again, *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto Good, to bring to pass, as it is this Day, to save much People alive.*--Could any thing appear more fortuitous and accidental, than that * *Kish* should lose his Alliance and send his Son *Saul* to seek them? Yet it was still more unexpected and surprising even to *Saul* himself, that instead of the he shou'd find a *Kingdom*. † The King of *Egypt's* Edict was intended to destroy the *Israelite* Children, lest they should multiply, and so get them up out of the Land. Yet in Pursuance to this very Edict *Moses*

* 1 Sam. chap. 9, 10. † Exod. chap. 1, 2.

expos'd, *Pharoah's* own Daughter finds
 him,---nourishes him for her own Son,---
 and by these strange Ways he is preserv'd
 to be the Person by whose Hand God would
 give his People a wondrous Deliverance.
 But above all, observe that both Rulers and
 People had their several Aims in the *Death*
 of our LORD and SAVIOUR: The *Jew's*
 Malice and the *Roman's* Policy, *Pilate's*
 Fear, and *Herod's* Jealousy, the *Chief Priest's*
 Envy, and *Judas's* Treason, all concurr'd
 to bring him to his Execution: Yet by his
 Death are we saved,---by his Stripes are we
 heal'd,---by these unlikely Means was
 brought the greatest Blessing the World
 ever receiv'd,---the SALVATION of lost
 Mankind. And whatever the several Per-
 sons concern'd in this Tragedy propos'd to
 themselves: the Scripture assures us, (*Acts*
1. 28.) that, *All these were gathered toge-*
ther, but for to do whatsoever thy Hand,
God, and thy Counsel determin'd before to
doe.

HAVING thus far endeavour'd to make
 good the Apostle's Doctrine against the E-
 nemies of Providence, by shewing how all
 things

things work together for good to us; I would now apply it to ourselves, and improve by laying before you some of the many Advantages which do from hence accrue to them who sincerely love GOD,

1st. Do we know that all things work together for good to them that love GOD then we may securely set our Hearts at ease and enjoy a peaceful Tranquility and Serenity of Mind under all the Hurry and Bustle in all the Confusion and Disturbance of this busy and troublesome World. For when we consider that all Affairs here, which in their first View seem to depend more on Chance and Accident, than on Prudence and Reason, where Malice is successful, and Injustice Triumphs over Righteousness, where the blackest Crimes escape oft unpunished and encrease and go on with a higher Haughtiness and more bare-fac'd Insolence, by reason of this Impunity; when we consider, I say, that notwithstanding this Appearance, we are assur'd that they are all govern'd by an unerring WISDOM, and a most powerful PROVIDENCE which does not suffer any thing to take its course without their order nor permit any thing, but will

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act Justice, and infinite Goodness; we then
 and abundant Cause to satisfy all Doubts
 and Objections of our Mind, to silence all
 Murmurs of our Reason, and to repose
 ourselves on this infallible Conduct and Dis-
 cretion, with an entire Resignation of our shal-
 low Judgment. We are now no more sur-
 priz'd or stagger'd at the Prospect of pre-
 vailing Iniquity, at discountenanc'd Vertue,
 banish'd Justice, at oppress'd Innocence,
 and despis'd Religion : Because we are tho-
 roughly perswaded that none of these Things
 could be so, unless our God saw fit to permit
 and suffer them ; and that he wou'd never
 suffer them, unless he had very good Reason
 in doing so, unless it were incomparably
 more for the common Good, and for our
 Advantage in particular to permit, than to
 prevent them.

'Tis no matter that these Reasons are not
 known to us, 'tis enough that they are well
 understood and approv'd by God, and that
 they shall hereafter be discovered to us too,
 when the Light of Glory shall have dispell'd
 the Darkness and clear'd up our Understand-

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ing. 'Tis of no consequence neither that b
the secret Procedure of Providence there
much Evil tolerated, as the Contempt
good Men, and the Flourishing of Bad, th
Misery of People, and Destruction of N
tions, --- and what is worst of all, the *irre-
parable Loss of many Souls*: for tho' all th
be too just a Subject of Grief to any think
Person, yet this Grief is over-ballanc'd an
filepc'd by remembring that it is God's goo
pleasure upon most righteous Motives,
let them be just thus; and that the fan
God, who connives at present at these M
chiefs, knows how to repair and make
mends with Interest for them,--- Nay mo
from those very Ills to extract the most sublin
and valuable Good. What can be conceiv
more dismal and shocking than *the Fall
Man*? And yet God made this the Occas
of so unspeakable a Blessing to us by the
carnation of the ETERNAL WORD, *the m
inestimable Price of our Redemption*, th
this very Misery, how deplorable soever
itself, is improv'd to the greatest Happin
that ever was bestowed upon us. If
cou'd suppose that some Occurrences mig

contriv'd to the greater private Benefit of some particular Persons, yet it is certain they wou'd not be better manag'd for the publick Good of the whole, nor for the End God proposes in all his Works, *the Interest of his Glory, and the Manifestation of his Divine Attributes.* For if there were no sinners to be punished, how cou'd his Patience and Long-suffering be evidenc'd in his bearing with, and waiting for their Repentance? How wou'd his Mercy be declar'd in pardoning, and his Justice in punishing them?

2dly. *If we know that all Things work together for good to them that love God; we have Faith enough steadily to rely on this Promise, we shall undoubtedly experience a full Assurance and unshaken Security in all those Dangers that do, or can threaten us: Because Providence, who does more heartily espouse our Interest, and with more Concern and Efficacy than we ourselves can be conceiv'd to do, does ever encompass us with his Protection, --- cover us with his Shield, --- and defend us from whatever may truly be said to annoy us. For who is he*

*he that will harm us, if we be followers
 that which is good?* No! God does in
 our Straits and Temptations prevent us w
 the Assistance of his Grace, and acquaints
 that *his Grace is sufficient for us*: He de
 support our Courage against all the Frow
 and Attacks of the World; he inspires us
 all our Difficulties with an undaunted
 solution; and preserves us from dreading
 thing to a criminal Degree, and from fear
 any thing so much as the offending or
 pleasing Him. Hence proceeds that
 difference for all things here below,
 — that unmov'd Constancy which we can't
 observe and admire in the good Christ
 When exercis'd with the most violent Sho
 of Fortune, and tofs'd on the threat
 Billows of a tempestuous World, he qui
 reposes himself on the Testimony of a g
 Conscience ---- an undaunted Integrity
 and a firm Reliance on the Care of
 providence; he laughs at all the Designs,
 Malice either of Men or Devils can form
 against Him, and at all the impotent and
 Efforts they make to drive him from
 Hold: Because he has fix'd himself upon
 Ro

ock, and is supported by an Arm Infinitely
 superior to that of his Enemies and Oppres-
 sors. Let the Rain descend, and the Floods
 come, and the Winds blow, they may beat
 upon the Foundation of the Structure, but
 can't fall; for the Gates of Hell can't pre-
 vail against this so well plac'd a Confi-
 dence. He knows with the Apostle (*Heb.*
11. 5, 6.) who it is that has said, *I*
will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
And therefore may boldly say, The Lord is
my Helper, and I will not fear what Man
shall do unto me. (*Psalms xxiii. 4.*) *Yea, tho'*
I walk through the Valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou, O God,
art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they
comfort me.

3dly. THIS KNOWLEDGE that all things
 work together for good to them that love,
 and administers an inexpressible Comfort,
 consolation and Joy under all those Crosses,
 and Sufferings, which in the Esteem of the
 world are reputed Adversities and Afflic-
 tions. For when God visits us with Sick-
 nesses or Pain, with Poverty or Disgrace,
 with

with the Loss of Estate or of Friends, which we most set our Hearts upon, or the like, we are assured that nothing of all this could befall us, unless God had order'd it so, having seen it most expedient for us; whose Wisdom in it we can't question, and whose Kindness we can't suspect. No; we know his Mercy is often then the most indulgent to us, when he uses the greatest Severity, and when we smart most under his Rebukes, and those Lashes which he inflicts are the best Evidences of his Tenderneſs and Love to us, because they are the very Methods which he usually brings his greatest Favours to himself. Perhaps he sees it necessary thus to wean us from our Fondness for this Life, where if every thing about us were easy and convenient we shou'd mistake it for our Home, and fancy it good for us to stay Here, and consequently shou'd never desire nor think of that better Place which he has prepar'd for us. 'Twas St. Peter's Complaint at our Lord's Transfiguration, but the Holy Spirit tells us, *he then knew not what he said.* (Luke ix. 33.) Perhaps he is pleased to shew us the Folly of our Wishes when

pretend to choose for ourselves, and to
 us with such a Condition which of all
 ers we shou'd least have desired. 'Tis
 much to be happy both here and here-
 . *Abraham* told the rich Man so, (*Luke*
 25.) *Son remember that thou in thy*
time recivest thy good things, and like-
 Lazarus evil Things : But now he is
ported, and thou art tormented. If so,
 and give me my Comforts hereafter !
 Providence well knows that Riches, and
 hours, and Pleasures are the Accommo-
 ons of that Road which leads to De-
 ction; he therefore points out to them
 t love him a more rugged Path, and thro'
 grace and Contempt leads them to Glory,
 thro' Sorrows and Troubles to everlast-
 Rest, — thro' Humiliation to Honour,
 and thro' the Cross to a Crown. Per-
 our Circumstances require that we
 ld be tried or refined: He who best
 ws this, commits us to the Furnace of
 bulation to purge away our Dross, and
 prove the sincerity of our Faith; he by
 rtification pares off what is amiss, super-
 us, or imperfect, that so he may polish,
 compleat

compleat, and more exactly conform us to the
Image of his SUFFERING CRUCIFIED SON

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I DO not say this without good Warra-
for we have the Example of all true Lov-
of God that are gone before us, who th-
thought, and thus practis'd; who in all th-
Disappointments and Afflictions not o-
silently submitted to, but comforted the-
selves, rejoiced, and gloried in them. Th-
the first Christians *rejoiced in HOPE*, a-
not only so, but *gloried in TRIBULATION*
also. *Rom. v. 2, 3.* Thus St. Paul (2 Co-
xii. 10.) *took pleasure in Infirmities, in*
proaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions,
Distresses for Christ's Sake, and gloried
them only: (Gal. vi. 14.) God forbid
I should Glory, SAVE in the Cross of our L-
Jesus Christ, by whom the World is cruci-
unto me, and I unto the World. Thus
other Apostles (*Acts v. 41.*) *departed*
the Presence of the Council, rejoicing
they were counted worthy to suffer shame
his Name. A very Heathen could obser-
how glorious and divine a Spectacle it
to see a good Man wrestling with his

Fortune*: *How much more so must it be, to behold a CHRISTIAN bravely holding out against the Attacks of the WORLD and SATAN? Could we but view St. Paul dragging his Chains which he wore for the Sake of his Master, doubtless he wou'd appear more August and Illustrious than the proud Conqueror in the midst of his Splendor and Triumphs; Ay, and I add that God, when he call'd him thus to suffer for him, bestow'd a greater Mark of his Favour upon him, than when he caught him up to the third Heaven.*

ably, and *Lastly*. DO we indeed PRO-
 ceed to know that all things work together
 good to them that love God, and please
 themselves with being of that happy Num-
 ber? How is it then that we are not a-
 voided to betray so much importunate Care
 and Solitude to acquire, so much Discon-

Ecce Spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi-
 tus: ecce par Deo dignum! vir fortis cum malâ fortunâ
 confusus.

Seneca de Providentia. Cap. 2.

E

tent

tent and Uneasiness in the want of, the trifling Conveniences and Superfluities of this Life? With what Face can we indulge that Spleen, Chagrin, and Melancholy which is now the real or fancied Distemper so much in Fashion? Where the Disease is not in the Body, but in the Mind; where Vapours may be pretended, but Dislike of our Circumstances is in truth our ailment there surely this Truth, were it heartily believed, wou'd be a Sovereign Cure. *How our SAVIOUR applies the Remedy!* Providence with a liberal Hand supplies the Wants of the most inconsiderable of Creatures; ---- If he * *feed the young Ravens that call upon him*; ---- If he † *clothe the Grass of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is cast into the Oven*; ---- If a Sparrow can't fall to the Ground without your heavenly Father, and the very Hairs of your Head are all numbred; How can this PROVIDENCE ever be supposed to abandon MAN, the Master-piece and finishing Stroke of the CREATION, which alone bears the Image and Resemblance of Himself, and

* Psal. cxlvii. 9.

† Mat. vi. 30.

§ Mat. x. 29, 30.

* Mat.

the chief Object of his Care and Love? Will he suffer him to perish thro' Want, or Hunger, or Nakedness? Can we ever despair of a *seasonable Supply*? I am sure he has commanded us to * *take no thought what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, where-withal we shall be clothed;---* Has he told us † *our heavenly Father knows we need of all these Things*; and if we do our Part, || *all these shall be added unto us*. If Providence supply the sinner, his Enemy, with enough and to spare: If he furnish him with Conveniences and Superfluities, with Riches, Honours and Pleasures; how can his good and faithful Servants distrust him for *Necessaries*? They need not they credit the Observation of the Psalmist as to matter of Fact. *Psal. xxxvii. 25. I have been young, and now am old; (says the Lord) yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their Bread. If God sometimes appears slack (as some Men count Weakness) in coming to our Succour and Relief, it is doubtless to let us feel our own Weakness and Insufficiency, and lead us in*

E 2

our

* Mat. vi. 31.

† Ver. 32.

|| Ver. 33.

our Wants to *apply with more Fervour and Faith to his BOUNTY*. If he do not furnish Fuel to our Extravagance, Pride, or Luxury *this is the greatest Expression of his Care for us*, lest those things should deceive us into a Perswasion that this World is all we are to hope for or expect. If God do not visibly show'r down Abundance upon us yet *there is no good Man but does perceive a secret Blessing going along with the little he has, prospering all he does, and sweetening all with a contented, satisfied Mind.*

I WOULD not be understood as tho' this were to encourage you to quit your honest Callings, and expect Providence should support you in Idleness: No! *however he causes things to work together for your good*, it is still upon the supposal that you put to your helping Hand,---concurr and co-operate with him both to the *Maintenance of your Body* and the *Sanctification of your Soul*. That which the Gospel condemns is that restless eager Importunateness for the good things of this Life,---those unjust Repinings that you enjoy no more, and Doubts and Fears

loosing what you do enjoy,---that perpetual Solicitude to supply your present wants and prevent your future. You must go on in your lawful Employments, without too great Application and Passion; you must provide for your Occasions, without too much Concern and Uneasiness; you must be diligent in your Business, without Murmuring and Repining if the Event does not answer your Expectations; because the Success does not depend on *you*, but upon *Providence* who directs the good and the bad Issues, and makes the one as well as the other subservient to your great End and best Interest. So that as you are not too much to hug your selves upon what which you fancy falls out for the Best, neither are you to despond upon what is a worse Appearance; because the latter do very often contribute as much, or more to your eternal Happiness, as the former do.

Your *main Concern is not*, you know, *the Care of this Body* which is every Moment mould'ring into Dust, but *the Salvation*

tion of your immortal Part, whose Port must be an Eternity either of BLISS or WOE. Wherefore seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and these Things shall be added unto you. your mind on your Home as you ought, and you will not think the trifling Occurrences in your Journey very much worthy your Notice; things in which you are of little concern'd as you are in ** the Times and the Seasons*, which it is not for you to know, since *the Father has all these things in his own Power.* Apply your self with Zeal and Fervour to do your Master's Business, and be assur'd his Providence will not desert or abandon you in your Way, nor intermit his Care of you. Espouse his Interest heartily, and testify your Love to him by your Obedience, and then need not fear that he will be wanting in a suitable Return, since *he has promised that all things shall work together for good to you.*

UPON the whole, methinks, we can choose but be convinc'd that we are oblig'd ever to have our Eye fix'd upon God's

* Acts i. 7.

governing Providence, and that we securely
 repose in the Care he has engaged him-
 self to take in our Conduct;---that we re-
 ceive, as from his Hand, all the Events that
 befall us, whether they are agreeable to our
 wishes or otherwise, since he had decreed
 from Eternity, tho' he executes them
 in Time, and makes both Prosperity and
 adversity equally instrumental to the good
 designs us; and that *the knowing this*
 should be our Support in Distress, our Se-
 curity in Danger, our Refuge in Want,---
 our Safety in all the Revolutions and
 ruinous Postures, of human Affairs.
The Condition of this Life, and the *Obliga-*
tion of Charity will not suffer us to be *wholly*
touch'd at publick Disorders and reigning
 Misery; this wou'd be too *Stoical* an Indif-
 ference and Insensibility. But when it is
 in our Power to remedy them, nor can
 we see any Hopes that the World should be-
 come better, we ought not to let THIS
 disturb our Quiet, or interrupt our Duty: We
 should lay aside our *useless* Fears, calm our
 inward Troubles, and *entirely depend* upon
 the adorable Disposals of PROVIDENCE: *We*
should

*should silently admire and adore the Depth
the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge
of God! and confess that unsearchable
his Judgments, and his ways past finding
Rom. xi. 33.*

DO thou then, MOST INDULGENT FATHER, ordain, permit, and dispose of things as it seems best to thy Wisdom: submit all I have, and all I am, and entirely resign my self and them to thy good Pleasure. I thankfully receive all from thy Hand without reserve, whether Joy or Grief, whether Abasement or Abundance, whether Disgrace or Honour, whether Life or Death. I have no Desire of my own, but that thy Will may be done, and that I may be enabled to tread that Path thou hast chalked out for me; that so ever under the Guidance of thy Providence I may arrive at that happy Place whither thou callest me, and be admitted to contemplate, to admire, and to praise thee to all ETERNITY.

The End of the First Sermon.

The great Importance of finishing our course with joy, and the necessary means of doing it.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D AT THE

Cathedral-Church of

WORCESTER.

of a Late *PREBENDARY* of the said
CHURCH.

Printed in the Year, MDCCXXXVI.

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COMMON

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Acts xx.†24.

but none of these things move
me, neither count I my life
dear unto my self, so that I
might finish my course with
joy.



THE FINISHING OUR COURSE
WITH JOY, or the attaining
to an happy Conclusion of
our Life is, I think, *the uni-*
versal Wish of all Mankind:

the bad Man, as well as the good;---the
careless Triffler, as well as the thinking Chri-
stian;---he that will not be at the Pains to
do WELL, as well as he that does, wou'd
not desire (if a *Wish wou'd do the Business*) to
do WELL, since he must die one time or other.

F 2

*Let

* Numb. xxiii. 10.

Let me die the Death of the Righteous, let my last end be like his, was the Prayer of Balaam himself at the very time he came with a purpose to curse *Israel*. Now if the WORST OF MEN, and who lead most dissolute wretched Lives do yet *knowledge the vast Importance of clearing themselves well*, what must we think of it, ('tis to be hoped) do better consider, daily pray for, and as constantly endeavour to arrive at an happy Death? How should we ever have our approaching Dissolution in View, who daily see and deplore the miserable Departure of the wicked and penitent, which is *not only a violent Taking of their Bodies from their Souls*, but *an eternal Separation of their Souls from their GOD!*

IT is not without good Reason, that Life is here resembled to, and call'd by the Name of a COURSE or RACE, where All is at Stake; and where, according to the Issue, we either *gain the Prize of eternal Happiness*, or *lose it for EVER*. It is no great matter how long or how short

Way is; how soon, or how late we arrive, so we do but escape the Dangers that attend us, come safe to the Goal, and be crown'd as Conquerors:---No matter what Mode we make, what Rank we hold, what Equipage we appear-in in the World, provided we *finish our Course with Joy*, and *emerge from this Vale of Trouble, Labour and Misery* unto our REST, our COUNTRY, our HOME. *That is not*, believe me, *the best Life* which is stretched out to the greatest Length; but *that wherein most has been done*: our Age is not so much to be reckon'd of by the Years we have thro', as by the Number and Excellence of the Vertues we have acquir'd, and the Duties we have practis'd. As there are some who are *early ripe* for Eternity, and do make so speedy Advances in *their great Work* as to accomplish that in a short Space, which others can't compass in a long Series of Years; so there are others who *grow old in Time*, and yet are but *children in Religion*:---Who do but then *begin to live*, when it is *time to die*; and when a long Age is worn out, they leave
no

no Sign behind them that they ever w
at all. What is it to me whether I die
this or that Period of my Age? *A few
Years more or less, make but a very in-
siderable Difference in the Account of
that reckons for ETERNITY.* What is it
to me whether I live here in State and Gr
deur, or in Retirement and Obscurity,
in Riches and Abundance, or in straiter
meaner Circumstances,---in Power and
thority, or in Subjection and Depend
But *it is of infinite Consequence, and
everlasting Interest is concern'd in it, that
I depart hence in the Fear and Favour
God; since an happy or miserable Future
depends upon the good or bad End and Blessing
I make.*

SUCH thoughts as these the Apost
Words do naturally suggest. For we m
observe that they are part of his Discou
to the Elders of the Church when he took
his last Leave of them; where (among
other things) he foretells the Persecution
expected, *viz.* that tho' it was not reveal
that he was to be put immediately to Dea

Imprisonments and Sufferings certainly
 ere to be his Lot. *Ver. 22. 23. And now*
bold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeru-
tem, not knowing the things that shall be-
me there: save that the Holy Ghost
testifieth in every City, saying, that bonds
and afflictions abide me. Whether this
 was reveal'd immediately to himself, or
 whether to others concerning him, as it was
 in *Agabus*, in the next Chapter, *ver. 10,*
 Upon which he declares how ready he
 was to endure any thing, so he might but
 FINISH HIS COURSE WITH JOY. *But none*
of these things (says he) move me, that is,
expresses it more agreeably to the words
of the Original, tho' to the same sense) But
nothing of this do I make account, nor is
it in itself of any Consideration to me, so
that I might finish my Course with Joy;
 it is, so as he afterwards explains him-
 self, *2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.* at the nearer approach
 of his Departure. *I have fought a good*
fight, (says he) I have finished my course,
and have kept the faith. Henceforth there is
laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness,
which the Lord the righteous judge shall give
me at that Day.

Now

Now from hence we may take out very concerning Lessons. *First*, HERE see how very necessary it is that we pursue our Course with Joy. And *Secondly*, learn how to do so: Yet neither of these seem to be studied by us with due Application; we seem to be wholly intent upon an easy and commodious Progress in our Journey, without ever thinking what the Conclusion of it will be. I grant we would desire to DIE WELL, but the Mischief is we take no Pains to LIVE SO; without which the OTHER is not to be hoped for. Wherefore I take Occasion to recommend these Things to your most serious Consideration.

First, Since the Importance of finishing our Course with Joy is so hugely great, I would convince you that an innocent, useful, holy Life is the best and properest, if not the only way, to arrive at an happy End. This is evident from St. Paul's being so regardless of what ever should befall him, and of Death it self, so that he might be so happy as to attain to this good End.

Second

Secondly, *SINCE our whole Life is but a continued Course or Journey towards our End*, I wou'd perswade you as a great motive to perform it as you ought, *to have your End always in view and ever remember that you are every moment hastening to your Death*. This the Apostle's Example powerfully recommends to us, when upon his Actions he here makes the Prospect of his Death to have so great an Influence.

First then, I wou'd convince you that *the best Means of attaining to an happy Death is to lead an innocent, useful, and holy Life*. To which purpose consider,

First, That since * *when we shall have done all those Things which are commanded* we are yet to acknowledge *we are unprofitable Servants*, We must not neither pretend to deserve at God's Hands *so great a Reward as is the finishing our Course with Honour*. No!-----Tho'we shou'd have all the

* Luke xvii. 10.

Zeal of the Apostles,---the Constancy of the Martyrs, the Purity of Angels,---and the Love of the Seraphims,---tho' we should live the holiest Life that ever was lead upon Earth, yet we shou'd have done no more than is our Duty to do: We cou'd not upon that Score claim our Reward as due; it would still be the pure Effect and Result of God's infinite Mercy and Bounty: Yet notwithstanding all this, the SCRIPTURE is full of Exhortations to be righteous, and Promises to them that are so, that we have all the Encouragement imaginable, upon the Prospect of a well spent Life, to trust assuredly that God will continue his Grace to us to enable us to persevere to the End of it. Tho' we are to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, yet our christian Hope is ever to be the predominant Virtue in the good Man. We are to rely upon God's divine Mercy, and to believe that, if we are not wanting to ourselves, God will undoubtedly accomplish the good Work he has begun in us.

Secondly, OBSERVE farther, that *besides* the Influence of these christian Duties of FAITH and HOPE, there seems to be a positive Connection between the holy Progress and happy Conclusion of our Life. And this does not gather so much from the infallible efficacy of God's Grace,---the Sincerity and Integrity of the Man's Designs and the secret Testimony of a good Conscience, as from the repeated Promises of GOD in his Word; * where we are assur'd that *what we have sowed in our Life, we shall reap at our death*;---as we *set out*, so we *conclude* our journey; that the *same Master* who *set us to Work* will *pay us our Wages*, and we shall at length come to *that place* whither *the path we make choice of* leads to. From hence the Conclusion is obvious, if we go in the *strait Gate*, engage in the *narrow Way*, we shall at length find *that Life* which *these* do lead :----if we *work in the Lord's Vineyard*---bear the *Heat and Bur-*

* See Gal. vi. 7. 8, 1 Cor. ix. 24, &c. Mat. xx. Parable of the Labourers, and John viii. 24. with Rom. vi. 23. Mat. 13, 14.

then of the Day, he shall at last pay us what he agreed with us for :---- if we strive to run as we ought, we shall undoubtedly obtain the Crown proposed; and if we sow the Seed of Virtue and Grace, we shall at the Harvest reap the Fruits of Happiness and Glory.

Thirdly, I wou'd confirm this yet farther to you from the Example and Experience of the BEST of MEN who are gone before us, and who have still declar'd their stedfast Expectation of their Reward from the ALLWISE and ALLPOWERFUL GOD, who has SENT SENSE and GRACE with them; and by the Help of HIS GRACE, their Continuance in Practice of their Duty. See with what Confidence in the midst of his Miseries Job promises himself an happy Resurrection and the Blessings attend it! I can't doubt, (says he) but my Almighty Judge and Saviour is ready and able to make good his Promise. So I trust that one Day I shall triumph over Death,----I shall be reviv'd from my Deadness,----I shall come out of my Grave, and shall enjoy the beatifick Vision of God, and this very Body, which now covered a

with Sores, shall then shine in Lustre and
 rays of Glory. *I know that my Redeemer*
liveth;---and tho' after my skin worms de-
stroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see
 Job xix. 25, 26. To the same pur-
 pose St. Paul expresses himself, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I*
am persuaded that he is able to keep that
which I have committed unto him against
that Day: that is, I am well assur'd of his
 faithfulness on whom I rely and in whom
 repose my Trust; as he is to be my Judge,
 so he will be my Redeemer too; he will
 with Interest return that at my Death which
 have as it were deposited with him by the
 service and Obedience of my Life.

Fourthly. I would add that *several of the*
Attributes and Perfections of God are in-
terested in the crowning a good Life with a
fitable End: as his VERACITY, his WIS-
 DOM, and his GOODNESS. The infallible
 Truth of God is herein concern'd, in as much
 as he has often passed his Word, engag'd his
 Promise that he will hereafter afford us the
 like Treatment as we use him with here:
 if we are a sham'd of and forsake him in our
 Life

Life time, he will neglect *us* at our last Hour; but that he will protect *us* against all Enemies, and make *us* * *more than Conquerors*, if we confess, obey, and express an feigned Endeavour to please and approve ourselves to him. The *Wisdom of his Providence in the Government of the World* seems to require that God shou'd not propose an uncertain Hire and Wages to them whom he employs in his Work; least this Means they should grow idle and careless from an Apprehension that their Labour might be in vain: but to excite our Resolution and Courage in keeping his Commandments and using those Means he prescrib'd, it is reasonable to suppose he gives sufficient Assurance of obtaining our End and of enjoying the Reward that is propos'd to our Obedience. *God's Mercy* is yet more engag'd in this Affair: for he often extends his Bounty to the wicked and profane who have provok'd and continued thro' a long Train of Years;---if by wondrous Indulgence he sometimes op

* Rom. viii. 37.

the SANCTUARY of REPENTANCE and
 TEMPLE of his GLORY, is it imaginable
 will be less compassionate towards *them*
 have *long serv'd him faithfully*, and
 when thro' Surprize and Frailty they
 and his Displeasure, have implor'd his
 and Reconciliation by an *earnest*
 and *speedy Repentance*? Will he
 and *such* at the time of their greatest
 and *the Hour of Death*? Will he at length
them to die in their Sins, who have
liv'd in his Grace and Favour?

these Reflections have been sufficient
 convince you of *the Necessity of a good*
 to *the finishing your Course with Joy*,
 I leave to subjoin a very concerning
 section or two:--the former of which is,
 THAT you wou'd *lay seriously to Heart*
infinite Risk you run whilst you continue
a State of Sin and Disobedience, or in-
your selves to any one known Transgres-
of God's Law. For as every Hour of
 your Life may, for ought you know, be
 your last, *it is the Extremity of Imprudence*
 and Folly to live one Moment in such a Con-
 dition

dition as you are afraid to die in. Methinks it is not conceivable how a *Christian*, who has the Use of his *Reason* and the yet further Light of his *Gospel-faith*; shou'd ever dare to sleep whilst he knows himself under the Displeasure of God, and so expos'd to the *immediate* Danger of being lost eternally; since he may very justly expect it should be *his Lot*, as it hath been that of many one in his very Circumstance to have *Sleep conclude in Death*, and never to awake again but in *irrecoverable* Misery. You may acknowledge that as it is *very just*, so it is *not unusual* with God to chastise the Presumption of such as go on in a resolv'd Habit of Vice, and think they shall still have Time enough to repent;---*to punish them* I say, *with a sudden and unforeseen Death*. And what Security do you pretend from that which has befallen Thousands of better Men than you? Why then, I pray, may not the same be your Fate? And if it should, Lord! what wou'd become of you!---*you are lost and undone for ever!*

I do not speak this only of the great, clamorous, and flagrant Crimes of the Age; but also of those suppos'd to be less malignant, and but the *Beginnings of Sin*. I say the Allowance of these is extremely dangerous, because all Sins are in some sort chain'd together, and we too easily pass not only from one Degree, but from one Kind to another. The longest Rivers, you know, near the Spring-head are but little Brookes: and the most enormous Disorders in our practice have but the same Original with these lesser Faults, which we carelessly disregard. Men do not launch out at once into the wide Ocean of Lewdness and Debauchery, but by slow Degrees, by little and little creep on before they can be thoroughly paced in Villany. So that what we erroneously judge a *small Fault, a Trifle, a Slip of Youth*, is in truth no such matter; but a *daring Affront to GOD, an Act of Rebellion*, and perhaps *that very thing from which our everlasting Misery derives its source*. We see many Examples of this in scripture. — *Saul's* utter Rejection commenc'd with such a Disobedience as he had

a plausible Excuse for. He spar'd it for the best of the Sheep and of the O which shou'd have been destroy'd: when charg'd by *Samuel* with it, he ple that he did so *to sacrifice unto the Lord God*. The eternal and temporal Miser all the Sons of *Adam* began with an in siderable Fault in Appearance, --- *the Ta of a little forbidden Fruit*. The Man was found * *gathering a few Sticks on SABBATH-DAY was ston'd with St that he died*. † *UZZAH put forth his to the Ark of God,, and took hold of it the Oxen shook it. And the Anger of Lord was kindled against UZZAH, and smote him there for his Error, and then died*. The Servant in the PARABLE, || brought his Lord's Talent again with Improvement, was as an *unprofitable* vant, *cast into outer darkness*. All w shou'd inspire us with a just Horror Detestation of every Sin, how small so we are pleas'd to think it, since the

* Numb. xv 32, &c. † 2 Sam. vi 6, 7.

|| Mat. xxv 14, &c

of all is enough to give occasion to our
 sin, and Rise to our *endless* Punishment.
 THE *other Direction* that I wou'd re-
 commend to you to secure an happy Death,
 the *constant exercise of PRAYER*. I do
 mean only the earnest Imploring the
 grace of sincere Perseverance, (which yet
 promises to them that ask it aright,
 when he engages himself to hear all our Re-
 quests which are made with FAITH;) but I
 mean also the *uninterrupted Attendance up-
 on all the Parts and Offices of Divine Wor-
 ship*; and particularly that *great solemn one*
 the HOLY COMMUNION. For this does
 in a more peculiar Manner, when worthily
 perform'd, preserve in the Soul its spiritual
 Food of Grace, and *effectually* contribute to
 persevering in Righteousness as *necessari-
 ly* as our daily Food preserves and confirms
 the Strength, Vigour and Health of our Bo-
 dy.—The antient Martyr *Ignatius* calls it *
 ANTIPOISON of DEATH: intimating that

Ἐγὼ ἄρτον κλῶντες, ὅς ἐστι
 ἑγέρματιν ἀθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος
 τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν ἀλλὰ ζῆν ἐν
 χριστῷ διὰ παντός.

Ignat, Epist. ad Ephes. ad finem.

*as the fatal Fruit our First Parents
 spread a secret and destructive Poison to
 our Frame; so the spiritual Food commu-
 nicates to our Souls such Vertue and Effi-
 cas preserves them from the Fear and
 tacks of Death. Whence I think it
 usually administred to sick and dying Ch-
 ristians, to fortify them in their warmest
 conflicts and Agonies, and to arm them ag-
 the Fraud and Malice of our grand En-
 when in these their last Moments he
 fails to employ his utmost Efforts ag-
 them. Besides, the Sacrament is the
 NEST of God's Favour; and we al-
 reckon our selves certain of a Promise
 we have sufficient Security of the Per-
 formance: So that by the constant Use of
 we lay the strongest Engagement im-
 able upon God to continue his Grace to
 since this is by his own Appointment not
 a MEANS whereby we receive the same
 also a PLEDGE to assure us thereof. If
 if any of these things move you, BRETH-
 or if you account your selves dear
 selves, encourag'd by these Comforts en-
 your to finish your Course with Joy.*

AND this will bring me to the *Second*
 thing I advanc'd, namely, That since *our*
Life is but one continued Course or
Journey towards our Grave; let me prevail
 with you, as a powerful Motive to perform
 what you ought, to have your *End* always
 in view, and ever to remember that you are
 every Moment hastening to your Death.

To improve this to our further Advan-
 ce, I must observe, 1st. *The having this*
thought (THAT WE MUST DIE) ever pre-
sented in our Minds, is in Truth a very power-
ful Incitement and Spur to keep us awake
and quicken us in the whole Course of our
Life. And if, as has been shewn, an *holy*
Life is the only Way to promote an happy
Death, it will no less evidently appear that
 the great *Inducement to live Holy is to*
consider that we must die shortly. For (to
 state this a little with you) how can any
 reasonable thinking Man engage his Heart
 and Affections to any thing here below,
 when he knows assuredly that he must be
 divorc'd in a very short while to be divorc'd
 from it, and bid an eternal *Adieu* to it?
 How can he be fond of the World, when he
 reflects

reflects that he is just going to be deprived of all its Enjoyments? What Charm can a Creature have to allure *him* who has solemnly renounc'd it, and is actually hastening to the Author of his Being? Can it think it worth the while to bestow so much Time and Cost upon improving and adding a little imaginary Beauty, which in a Grave to morrow perhaps shall change into the most gastly Horror and loathsome deformity? Are we not *nobly employ'd*, when all our Study is to gratify and pamper a mouldring Carcase, good for nothing but to be *a Feast for the Worms*? Is it not the most egregious Impertinence to labour, and sweat in *making a Fortune*, as we call it, when we foresee all that the Earth can give us in Recompence for our Pain, *is not more than a little Dust and Ashes*? Word, is it not the last Degree of Madness to defer our Repentance and securely indulge our Sins, when we are fully convinc'd that for ought we know, any one Moment of our Life may be our last,----may be *that fatal one* which drops us into ETERNITY.

• *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember*

End, and thou shalt never do amiss ; was
 Advice of the wise Son of Sirach :
 Eccl. vii. 36.) that is,---*They shall either*
fall at all, or at least will soon rise
again by a speedy Repentance. And how can
 we avoid observing, BRETHREN, that
 Sin creeps *insensibly* upon us---that we
 every Day draw *nearer and nearer* to our
 GRAVE? Do we not *feel* DEATH treading
 upon our Heels, and *hear him sum-*
ming us to the dreadful TRIBUNAL of our
 JUDGE? We do: and if so---say to what
 purpose will all those Trifles serve you
 now, which you now so eagerly pursue;
 rather *what Regret* will you not *feel*
 having so impatiently thirsted after
 that which you shou'd have either look'd
 upon with Indifference, or rejected with Scorn.
 What will you reap from all your
 mighty Projects, but Air and Smoak! or
 rather *Grief* and *Torment*, for having
 prefer'd the Shadow to the Substance,
 Vanity to Truth, and the Glory of this
 World to the Honour of God! Be not
 beguiled and put upon by vain Shew and
 Imaginary Delusions. If you search for
 Pleasure

Pleasure and Enjoyment, *follow after and lasting ones*: if you eschew Evil Trouble, *trouble at the Thoughts of ha* *deserv'd those that are endless.*

2dly. I observe again, *that it is the fatal Mistake in the World, and the great Mischief that can befall us, to live as tho* *were not to die; and to be perhaps surpr* *by Death, before we so much as betho* *our selves whether we were mortal or n* *This is a Case that often happens; and* *it may not be our Case, our Saviour has* *sufficiently forewarn'd us by an admirable* *apposite Parable, Luke xii. 16. He tell* *the Man dreamt of nothing but how* *dispose of his Abundance: he purpos'd* *pull down his Barns and build greater:* *had much Goods laid up for many Ye* *and he was full of enjoying them,---refo* *to take his ease, eat, drink, and be me* *But see the Folly of all such Projects!* *how soon all these tow'ring Hopes w* *blasted! For it immediately follows,* *20. God said unto him, thou Fool, this n* *thy Soul shall be requir'd of thee, then w* *shall those things be which thou hast pro*

...There are too many among us, BRE-
 THREN, that do as little care for *the*
thought of dying as that Man did; that
 if you do but name *Death* to them,
 and can't bear any Conversation upon so
 melancholick a Subject. But alas! the fur-
 ther they think to put the *Evil-Day* from
 them, the nearer still it approaches; and
 when they dream of it least, 'tis then very
 soon it knocks at their Door, and obliges
 them to dislodge. Now all the World
 owns it JUST in God that *this* shou'd be
 ...And I can't but think it a great In-
 stance of *his MERCY too*, that the Time of
 our Death is conceal'd from us: because
 this is a proper Means to keep us ever on
 our Guard, and to oblige us to be alway
 ready and prepar'd to receive it come when
 it will; which otherwise perhaps we shou'd
 not be. Hence it is that Death comes up-
 on us in such various Shapes and different
 Manners. Sometimes he attacks by slow
 degrees and at unawares: he lays a thou-
 sand Ambuscades for us by Land and by Sea,
 in the Town and in the Country, in War
 and in Peace. Sometimes he comes at the

End of a long Sickness; sometimes in the Midst of perfect Health; sometimes in our decrepid Age, and sometimes in our Bloom. Now he uses the outward Instruments of Violence---the Sword, or Fire, or Fall, or the like Accident; and then, inward and hidden Causes---the Burning of a Fever, or the Cold of a Palsy, ---the Inundation of Dropsy, or the Lingring of a Consumption. ---Now what sleeping is there in the Midst of *so many* Dangers? What Security can we promise our selves among *such unforeseen* Assaults? And if so; see, BRETHREN, the *monstrous Stupidity* of provoking God's *Wrath*, when we are *so uncertain* of our *Life*, and *so unassur'd* of a *sufficient Space* to *sue out our Pardon*!

3dly. I consider another Motive to have our Eye upon our End, that God does often in Justice snatch the Sinner away in the Commission of his Crime and the very Act of his Sin.--- Thus it far'd with Nadab and Abihu; when they presum'd to offer strange Fire, there went out a Fire from the Lord (says the Text Lev. x. 2.) and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Th

Thus *Corah* and his Company, (*Numb. xvi.*
1.) *the ground clave asunder that was un-*
der them, and the Earth open'd her Mouth
and swallow'd them up, and they went
down alive into the Pit. Thus *Zimri* and
Cozbi fell by the Sword and Zeal of *Phi-*
neas. (*Num. xxv. 8.*) *And the unfortunate*
Abolom was slain in his Disobedience and
Rebellion against his Father. I shou'd ne-
 ver have done, if I shou'd insist on the
 several Instances of such as have been caught
 away in unrepented Sin, who for a *Moment*
fancied Pleasure have passed into an *Eter-*
nity of real Torment. How many ev'ry
 day are surpriz'd in the Design and Contri-
 vance of their Villany before they can com-
 bat it, and justly meet the same Reward
 of their Purpose as they shou'd have had for
 the Execution? And how many to that
 who have a *good Resolution of Amend-*
ment, do never reach the Time they pro-
posed to repent in; and so by *deferring to*
the future what shou'd be done at present,
 miserably die in their Sins? Think of
 this a little, BRETHREN, and know that it is
 not impossible that some of you may be of
 this

this Number; and perhaps the less you apprehend this Fate, the more likely it is that you will meet with it. This should be seriously consider'd, and it is in truth a very pressing Argument to restrain you from Sin, and improve you in Holiness.—But what Malefactor wou'd have Leisure to repeat his Crime when he is just a going to receive his Sentence from his Judge, who were leading to Execution? What would we not undertake? What do we not vow to implore the Protection of Heaven when we find our selves on the Brink of a dangerous Precipice, or under the immediate Apprehension of a Shipwreck? 'Tis * *mark'd in antient Story, that the Wretches who whilst entertain'd at a sumptuous Feast had a naked Sword hung over him by a single Hair, had no Stomach to the Delicacies that were set before him so long as he apprehended his impendent Danger.* The MORAL is applicable to thee, O Sinner, between whom and the threatening Vengeance of Justice there is nothing but the slender Thread which ties thy Body and Soul together.

* Tull. Cicero. Tuscul. Disputat. Lib. 5.

Now if this Thread shou'd break, as very
 easily it may by a thousand Accidents, thou
 wilt not foresee what a *terrible* Con-
 dition,---what *irreversible* Misery thou
 wilt fall into. How then can you be *one*
minute easy under such a *dismal Prospect*?
 How can you presume to fool and trifle
 with such *apparent Danger*? If you are ca-
 pable of a serious Thought or a wise Re-
 solve, does it not concern you to *commune*
with your own Hearts, and by a thorough
 amendment of your Ways *prepare for a*
comfortable Death? ---How can you pro-
 duce your selves *Months* and *Tears* to come,
 and have not *one Day* your own----not *one*
moment in your Power and Disposal? Why
 do you defer that to an imaginary Fu-
 turity, (which perhaps will never be) which
 you might at Present do towards the work-
 ing out your eternal Salvation? *Happy is*
that Man who looks upon each day as his
last; and accordingly avoids those Sins, prac-
 tises those Duties, and puts himself in that
 condition in which he wou'd not fear to
 be found when summon'd to his great Ac-
 count! --- What wou'd you not do then to
 secure

secure your eternal Welfare? What Virtue wou'd you not practice?—What of Faith, Hope, Love, Contrition, Devotion wou'd you not exert, were you persuaded that you shou'd not live 'till Morrow? Look upon *the present Time* that which *may finish your Course* and open *Passage* to ETERNITY. Do not depend upon the Future, since you have no Promise of it, and you know that many, in better Health than you now are, did not reach it. Live ever in such a State as you wou'd be willing to die in; --- and as if you wou'd not be surpriz'd at your Change, how soon foreseen soever it may be, be ever in Readiness and dispos'd to welcome it when ever it comes. 'Tis *the great secret* of LIVING-WELL, *to be perpetually in a Disposition to DIE DAILY.* We shall never repent the Conduct that is regulated by the Advice, which our Death suggests. -- Whenever affairs fall under your Deliberation and Debate, consult your *latter End* and take the Resolution which it shall inspire. Ask your self what it wou'd be most advisable to do in this Case if you were now at the

Gasps; and from what you wou'd *then*
fittest to be done, you discover what
ought to do now. For as the Things of
 the World do ever blind our Eyes and pre-
 judice our Judgment, it is necessary to re-
 move these Cheats and *place our selves in*
Circumstances of leaving them, and
 our Reason will *clear up*, our Eyes
 be open, and we shall make a true Esti-
 mate of the *Vanity and Worth* of Things.
 AND thus, BRETHREN, I have endea-
 voured to convince you *how necessary it is*
to finish our Course with Joy, and have
 shewed *the Way how to do so*. It only re-
 mains that I close all with the excellent Di-
 vision of our LORD himself to this Purpose.
 (Isa. xlii. 35, 36.) *Let your loins be gird-*
ed about, and your lights burning; and ye
stand like unto Men that wait for
their Lord. --- You are but * *Strangers and*
sojourners here upon Earth as all your Fathers

• Ps. xxiix. 12.

were;

were; be ye ever in the posture of
 vellers. * *your Loins girt, your Shoes on
 Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and
 to march when ever your LORD shall*
 Let there be nothing in this World cap-
 of detaining you, no irregular Affection
 engage you here, --- no vicious Habi-
 charm you to your beloved Lust --- no L-
 of Guilt to retard your Haste towards
 return HOME, your ETERNAL REPOSE.
shou'd be as a City plac'd upon a Hill,
the Light of the World: Let your LIGHT
be burning, that is, § Let your light so shine
fore Men, that they may see your good Works
and glorify your Father which is in Heaven
 Remember the || *Fate of the foolish Vir-*
 who took no Oyl with their Lamps,
 letting them go out, were surpriz'd at
 unexpected Arrival of the Bridegroom,
excluded for ever. But be you ever do
 your Master's Work; ----ever comba

* See *Exod. xii. 11. with 1 Pet. i. 13, and Ephes. vi. 12*

† *Mat. v. 14.* § *Mat. v. 16.* || *Mat. xxv. 12*

your Enemy, --- conquering some Sin,
 improving some Vertue, and practising
 your Duty; --- and thus making your Call-
 ing and Election sure. THIS is the only
 treasure you can carry away with you :
 your Possessions, your Revenues, your E-
 mpire, your Friends and your nearest
 Relations will all forsake you at the GRAVE;
 nothing but the Good or Bad you do here
 will accompany you to the OTHER WORLD;
 let then your Lamps be burning. You know
 experimentally, you know that your Hap-
 piness is not to be met with Here, but
 hereafter. Live then in the constant Ex-
 pectation of it, in an unwearied Desire and
 holy Impatience of that Hour which shall
 transmit you to it. Never repine at your
 Labours and Afflictions; --- he that shall
 wipe away all these Ills, wipe away all these Tears,
 and reward all your Sufferings is at Hand :
 † He that shall come will come, and will
 not tarry. He shall be here perhaps be-
 fore you are aware; Be ye your selves like
 unto Men that wait for their LORD.

* 2 Pet. i. 10.

† Heb. x. 37.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

- Page 9. Line 15. after *with*, put a *Comma*.
Page 20. line 16. *r.* is *ever open and awake*, &c.
Page 21 line 21. for *forsee* read *foresee*.
Page 22. *The Figures at the Bottom* refer to *whole Chapter*.
Page 33. Line 3. *read* against all the Attacks, &c.
Page 47. line 10. after *ver. 10, 11.* thro' a Defect in the
Copy, a few Words are wanting.
Page 60. Line 19. after *us*, put a *Comma*.

Some other little Omissions of the Pref, the Reader is de-
sired to Excuse:

